Volume 6, Issue 25   Atari Online News, Etc.   June 18, 2004

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      ~ Akami Sites Attacked!  ~ People Are Talking!    ~ Aniplayer Updated!
      ~ New Web Ad Tools Out!  ~ Anti-Spyware Bill Okay ~ Comcast Slows Spam!
      ~ Canuck Spam King Done! ~ CGE Wows 'Em At E3!     ~ Going To Game Camp!
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                 -* Feds Decline To Create "Do Not Spam" List! *-



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->From the Editor's Keyboard              "Saying it like it is!"
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""
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Well, my brother has supposedly arrived back here in the States; I'm waiting
to hear all about his adventure in China. I still find it difficult to
believe that he got married while overseas! I've always known that when it
pertains to my brother, anything is possible!

The weather around these parts continues to be terrific. Temps are warm,
but not over-bearing. When the mercury started to rise toward uncomfortable
levels, we managed to get a quick, cooling rain - always in the evening when
it really helped. We managed to get the pool opened last weekend, with the
inevitable headache. This year, it was the top of the pool filter that we
had to replace. Naturally, the piece that we had to replace had been
discontinued, so we had to make do with a replacement part. It took us over
three hours to figure out a way to get that piece on in a manner that didn't
result in a shower of water shooting out from the filter every time we
turned the motor on! In the end, we won that battle!

We're looking forward to our (my second, my wife's first) vacation coming up
in a couple of weeks. We really need the rest! By then, hopefully all of
the major projects will have been completed and we'll really be able to get
in some relaxation together. We'll see.

Until next time...

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                            Aniplayer 2.22
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Hi,

After 20 months without new version for different causes (CT60, eiffel,
Linux, etc...), the latest version Aniplayer 2.22 is available on my
site http://aniplay.atari.org

The best of the new features are:

- mp4 reading (mpeg 4).
- codec sorenson video 3.
- more options for divx.
- search functions inside the Playlist.
- all SLB recompiled with Gcc 3.3 for the 68060 (faster when the FPU is
  used).

TO DO (next update):
Better synchro between mpeg audio / divx/mpeg (DSP buffer creates
pauses).

For more infos:

http://perso.wanadoo.fr/didierm/doc/eng/c_0b.htm

Now, Aniplayer is a freeware.

Regards,

Didier.

--

Didier MEQUIGNON   Aniplayer download: http://aniplay.atari.org

Address: 25,rue de l'Ascenseur 62510 Arques FRANCE
Atari FALCON 030/CT60 105 MHz 270Mb/13Gb ~ iMac 500Mhz 320Mb/20Gb

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                      PEOPLE ARE TALKING
                   compiled by Joe Mirando
                       joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I took a little break last week and didn't
hammer at you about registering to vote... let's say out of respect for
a former President. But you're not going to luck out again this week!
<g>

Before I get to that though, I'd like to ask again for anyone outside of
the United States to take a moment to email me with the current local
price for gasoline/petrol. I've only had two responses so far. I'd
really appreciate your input. Just drop a note to joe@atarinews.org with
your country and the price of gasoline/petrol per gallon/liter in your
local currency. Thanks for your help.

Okay, now on to the hammering...

You know, probably the best I've ever felt was after giving blood. It's
something simple that most of us can do, and even though it's so simple,
all the medical personnel and scientists in the world can't replace with
all the technology at their fingertips. Well, that's not exactly true.
They DO have a blood replacement, but it's a temporary fix at best, and

carries its own problems.

Anyway, after giving blood, the second best I've ever felt was after voting. Voting is not only a right, but a responsibility. It's your chance to participate in government... your chance to make a difference!

I know, it's not like you'll be doing it all by yourself but, honestly, how many things of far-reaching consequence are done by a single individual? Not many, that's for sure. The things that last... the things that really matter are usually done by groups of like-minded people who aren't heroes, just regular folks doing what they feel compelled to do. In the final analysis, HOW you vote is of less consequence than the fact THAT you vote.

There are still a few people out there who seem completely unable to fathom the fact that I'm not pushing an agenda here. It seems to blow their minds that I'm not saying, "Vote for <fill in the blank>".

The fact is that we've been blessed with a self-correcting system. The rebel in me just loves the idea that we get a chance to overthrow the government every four years. Give it a shot. What have you got to lose?

Okay, enough of that. Let's get to the news, hints, tips and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
==================================

Studs Murphy asks about emulators:

"Sorry if this is a FAQ but could anyone advise me on where to find an ST/STE emulator and how to use it? Does the region matter (I'm in UK)."

Brian Roland tells Studs:

"Some great places to start looking:
http://steem.atari.st
http://aranym.sourceforge.net/index.html
http://www.atari.st/
http://www.atari.org

Steem is very good. I highly suggest grabbing this one first for a number of reasons.

1. It offers good emulation.

2. Built into it are LOTS of valid links for places to get software and utilities (will save you a lot of 'searching'.

3. This one works with MIDI, has some good extended resolutions, is quite fast, AND has a really nice user interface.

Once you get this...use links it offers in the info section to find you TOS-Images.

Next you'll likely want to find some disk image utilities, which STeem's links will also help you find. GEM Explorer is a great thing to have if

you've a lot of older Atari disks that you PC can't read. Again, STeem's link section will help you find it easily."

Eduard Werner adds his opinions:

"Try steem (steem.atari.org) or StonX (stonx.sourceforge.net). I've tried both (only under linux, though); they come with documentation and readmes and work pretty well."

Joseph Place asks for confirmation on a problem he's having with HighWire:

"Anyone else with a CT60 try Highwire 0.2.0 yet? I get a 68000 exception in MagiC and an exception fault in TOS when I try to go to the web."

Joakim Hˆ¶gberg tells Joseph:

"HW 0.2.0 (030-binary) runs happily with FreeMiNT+XaAES on my CT60. Do you get an error also if you try HW in 030-mode? Did you setup cache settings in the highwire.cnf? And also, did previous HW releases work out alright on your setup?"

Joseph replies:

"It worked for a little longer in 030 mode, then locked the system without an error. When I tried again I got the 68000 exception. The cache is setup, and previous releases work fine. I also tried with minimal acc, auto programs and cpx's loaded; same problem."

Ian McCall asks about ethernet options for an STE:

"After a sudden rush to the head, I now have an STe on its way from eBay (last had an ST about twelve years ago). I'm in interested in connecting this up to an ethernet network, preferably not by using the DMA port that I might press in to action with a hard drive at some point. If possible, I'm also potentially interested in using this with alternative operating systems (MiNT, NetBSD?). And as this is just a fun sideline, it can't cost a great deal of money either."

Brian Roland asks Ian a couple of questions first:

"Which STe? How much memory?

If GEM is important to you...I recommend Geneva for the ST Class for low memory and best all around compatibility. Use the desktop of your choice with Geneva.

While NeoDesk is rather nice...if you're going to buy one, Thing or Jinee are much more up to date and well rounded. TaraDesk is free and might fit your needs.

As far as an AES goes...Geneva looks great, is very fast, and you won't find many, if any applications that won't run under it (there are all

kinds of compatibility flags that can be set...even one that freezes all
other apps and puts you in single tasking mode if need be).

MagiC is also a good choice for these reasons:
1. It's a bit faster than TOS, and includes pre-emtive multitasking.
2. When teamed up with HDDriver 8 you get background DMA disk access.

Support for more disk partition types, larger partitions, more
partitions, and long file names (vfat). These are the big PLUS factors
for MagiC.

MiNT...
The latest and most modern mint kernels are NOT geared for the ST class
of machines. They require a good deal of memory (and often 020 or
better w/FPU) in order to have all the bits that make MiNT great in the
first place. The bits are free however, and with patience and luck, you
might be able to piece together a setup with just the right kernel and
AES to get a useable setup.

With this in mind, you might start with the KGME/KEMD installation. Go
with a minix rather than an ext2 partition. The catch here is...I'm not
sure if older kernels will handle the Mint-Net version and drivers for
Enec ethernet boards.

As you get into the later kernels that without doubt will...they hog up
more and more memory, not leaving much room for any GEM AES and
applications to run.

BTW: Geneva will plug onto MiNT as a pre-emtive AES. You might need
NoHOG.ACC, and more modern AES calls may not be present.

You might try this first since it's free.
For starters, IGNORE MiNT-Net and minix or ext2....just get the kernel
and AES going. In this way you should have memory left to use GEM well.
Grab the latest XXAES distribution. Grab the latest Tera Desk
distribution. Start with older/smaller MiNT kernels for 68000 and work
your way newer till you find one that boots the Moose mouse driver
without complaints.

Gradually build a MINT and AES cnf file till you get one that happily
loads XXAES and TaraDesk. See what kind of memory you have left...might
be useable this way!"

Ian tells Brian:

"It's a stock 512Mb STe at the moment from the Ebay description, but I've
ordered a 4Mb upgrade as well.

Thanks - been a long while since I looked at anything ST'ish and I don't
recall the name Geneva. I do remember that I used to use Neodesk though.

Thanks for the warning - MiNT was on my list to try, but if it requires a
68020 I'm not sure it's what I'm after.

Anyone tried NetBSD by the way? I believe it's possible to run that on
the ST, but I'm not at all sure about how I'd hook things up to an
ethernet network if I took that route - don't know adaptors are
supported."

Djordje Vukovic adds:

"Well, the latest Mint kernels do not -require- a 68020, but it is true
that they are completely impractical to run it on a ST-class machine-
except for trying out e.g. an AES or a desktop... Even without Mint,
the size of useful Auto-folder programs and/or accessories can
accumulate to about 1-1.5MB (e.g. NVDI, serial port enhancers, tcp/ip,
a file selector, ST-guide, etc.) Adding to this the Mint kernel (and
1.16.* is -significantly- larger than previous versions), an AES and a
desktop, you can end up with about 500-700KB free RAM on a 4MB machine.
Definitely not very useful."

Jim DeClercq adds his thoughts:

"Do not forget CrippleMiNT, from the same source as EasyMiNT, which fits,
it says, on a single floppy, and will run on a ST. I tried the later
kernels, and my STe did not like them, but I have not tried CrippleMiNT,
and probably will not until all the TTs I have accumulated fail at once.

The STe was the machine I took with me on contract jobs away from home,
and found it and STiNG would do everything I wanted. Almost everything,
at least. There were some large JPG files that would not unpack.

Yes, the Secure Socket Link programs do need a 68020, but most of the
other ones do not. And, Tera Desk is a good, and small, desktop for small
machines.

So, I think it is possible to do a working MiNT setup, with TOS4.1 and
Tera Desk, and have some room left in memory.

Have not heard a user report on CrippleMiNT. You might try it, and tell
us all how it works."

Edward Baiz adds:

"I have a STe connected to the Ethernet using the EtherNEC
hardware/software from Lyndon A. Works through the cartridge port
and does a great job."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time,
same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Shadow Ops: Red Mercury!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""   Atari's 'Test Drive'!
                                   Mario vs Donkey Kong!
                                   And much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   -  The Latest Gaming News!
   """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""




        Atari's 'Test Drive: Eve of Destruction' Races to Xbox This Fall


Atari, Inc. announces that the latest iteration in its Test Drive racing
franchise, Test Drive: Eve of Destruction will be released this fall on the
Xbox video game system from Microsoft, in addition to the previously
announced version of the game which will be available for the PlayStation2
computer entertainment system in September. Developed by Monster Games,
Test Drive: Eve of Destruction captures the raw, unfettered thrill of
no-rules competition and is based on real-life extreme racing events.

"We are thrilled to bring Test Drive: Eve of Destruction, the sequel to
2002's Platinum Hits Test Drive to Xbox fans this Fall," said Nancy
MacIntyre, Vice President of Marketing for Atari's Beverly Studios.
"Monster Games has reinvigorated the Test Drive franchise with this fresh
departure from static road-course racing without losing touch with the core
elements that have made Test Drive one of the most recognized and
successful racing franchises in video game history."

Test Drive: Eve of Destruction is the first Test Drive game to feature:
vehicle damage, dirt tracks, crazy events and unorthodox vehicles like
school buses, taxis and hearses. Since its debut in 1987, the Test Drive
series has sold through more than $137 million worth of product on console
and PC.

Test Drive: Eve of Destruction blends the best elements of racing and
demolition and is packed with 25 different events, including Demo Derby,
where the last car standing wins; Gauntlet, where the player climbs behind
the wheel of a hearse and tries to finish a set number of laps while the
rest of the field attempts to stop him; Trailer Race, a new brand of racing
event, where the player competes while towing various types of trailers and
must finish the race with something resembling a trailer still attached.

Additionally, Test Drive: Eve of Destruction offers players a selection of
more than 30 nontraditional, custom vehicles, an in-game track announcer
and a split-screen multiplayer mode for up to four players.



              Atari Ships "Shadow Ops: Red Mercury" for Xbox


Atari has shipped "Shadow Ops: Red Mercury," the highly anticipated
cinematic first-person action game for the Xbox video game system from
Microsoft, to retail stores worldwide this week. "Shadow Ops: Red Mercury"
offers players a gripping movie-style experience through its unprecedented
Hollywood production values, intense action and ground-breaking sound and
visual effects.
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"Gamers will feel like they are saving the world in the latest big-budget blockbuster action film from the first moment their combat boots hit the ground in 'Shadow Ops: Red Mercury,'" said Wim Stocks, Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing for Atari. "With industry-leading sound effects that include THX Game Certification for the best audio and visuals, intense action from start to finish and an amazing storyline, the experience of playing this game is more like sitting in a top-end theater than sitting at home. 'Shadow Ops: Red Mercury' completely immerses gamers in the cinematic feel and gripping Hollywood-style action of the game."

In the game, the player fills the battle-ready combat boots of Frank Hayden, a special forces operative hand-picked to track down and destroy the stolen "Red Mercury," a secret substance of unspeakable power that threatens the world with nuclear annihilation. The player will face off against blood-thirsty terrorists, renegade military forces and highly trained enemy special forces in a last ditch desperation mission to prevent the ultimate terror from reaching the world's greatest cities.

Developer Zombie, Inc. partnered with AAA Hollywood talent for sound effects, script writing and music to make "Shadow Ops: Red Mercury" the most cinematic action game ever created, essentially blurring the line between Hollywood summer blockbuster films and interactive entertainment.

The game's groundbreaking features include:

-- More than 25 hard-hitting single-player missions that span the globe across heat-scorched villages in the Middle East, bombed out cities in Chechnya, lush jungle guerrilla encampments in Congo and frozen vistas and secret underground military installations in Kazakhstan

-- Hyper-intense split-screen cooperative mode through 10 unique missions designed specifically for tag-team play

-- Xbox Live! and System Link competitive multiplayer modes that include Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, Capture the Flag and Escort the V.I.P. for up to eight players

-- Immersive directional sound for ultra-realistic combat situations created by Soundelux, the Academy Award-winning sound studio best known for its work on films such as "Kill Bill," "Gladiator" and "Black Hawk Down"

-- An all-original score created by Inon Zur, a renowned composer of award-winning music for film, video games and television, that includes more than an hour of sweeping interactive music that reacts to the player's actions and changes for each location.

-- All music for the game was recorded by the Northwest Symphonia, providing for a powerful performance and a more compelling audio experience.

-- The game has earned the coveted THX Game Certification, indicative of the immersive and compelling audio experience usually heard only in blockbuster Hollywood films.

-- Writers Tag Mendillo and Ric Roman Waugh, renowned for work in films and video games, wrote the entire script for the game, including all in game cut-scenes and cinematics

-- Developer Zombie, Inc. traveled the world researching locations for the

game's levels, taking thousands of digital photos to create ultra-realistic textures for game locations like the Congo, Kazakhstan, Syria, Chechnya and more

-- Zombie, Inc. met with military consultants, including former special forces members, to create realistic character motion and military movements in the game; special forces members also provided motion capture animation for the game's cinematics.

-- More than 30 minutes of movie-like cinematics were created by Attitude Studios; cinematics were storyboarded and shot like a Hollywood film, using dramatic angles and sweeping shots to further immerse the player in the interactive blockbuster experience.

-- "Shadow Ops: Red Mercury" uses Epic Games' industry-leading Unreal Engine to accurately recreate the realistic and gritty look of the game's many locations; the engine's power provides for eye-popping visuals, highly realistic textures, dramatic special effects and blistering multiplayer action.

"Shadow Ops: Red Mercury" is available this week worldwide with an estimated retail cost of $49.95 and an ESRB rating of 'T' for Teen. For more information on "Shadow Ops: Red Mercury," please visit the game's official Web site at www.shadowopsgame.com .

Mario, Donkey Kong Battle Again

Nintendo has reunited its video game superstars with "Mario vs. Donkey Kong." This new Game Boy Advance exclusive harkens back to the simpler days of gaming - but simple doesn't mean easy.

You might think this is an action game, and it certainly has lots of finger flexing battles between two of the biggest game characters from the 1980s. But don't be fooled: Behind this action facade lurks a challenging puzzle game.

You play as pudgy Italian plumber Mario in a quest to retrieve miniature Mario toys from the greedy clutches of chest-thumping Donkey Kong.

While watching television one night, the overzealous ape spies a commercial for "Mini-Mario" dolls. Due to popular demand, stores are all sold out.

What's a primate to do? If you're Donkey Kong, you pillage the doll-making facility and run off with a sack of factory fresh Mini-Marios.

As Mario, you'll traverse dozens of zany levels to retrieve the dolls, one by one.

The game eases you in with levels that sport short jumps, casual rope climbs and straightforward monster tossing.

The game's true puzzle-solving nature soon becomes evident.

Sometimes, you'll have to figure out how to get from one area to another by stomping on a series of colored bumpers.

It's trickier than it sounds. Jumping on a yellow bumper causes red floors

to vanish, while landing on a red bumper has the reverse effect. Hitting the right bumpers in the right order isn't easy, especially considering you're up against a timer.

The graphics were colorful and crisp on my backlit Game Boy Advance SP, and Mario has a detailed appearance to show off some fancy new moves.

One of my favorites? Doing a handstand to block falling objects. And that's not all: A few extra taps of the controller sends Mario from handstand into a high-flying, twirling leap.

After you beat Donkey Kong and rescue the Mini-Marios, there are bonus, unlockable levels which make this game considerably longer than expected.

Each of the six worlds is split into six levels, and each level has two sections, ending with a showdown with the big, angry ape.

Finishing the regular game unlocks six bonus worlds, each with six levels. On top of that, there are even expert levels, but you'll have to collect the three gift-wrapped presents found in each level to play them.

Suffice it to say, there's an awful lot of doll collecting to be done, making this $35, E-rated game a good value.

The central joy of the Game Boy Advance is its portability. If you're like me, though, be mindful when playing this one in public. It had me shouting in victory and defeat.

Often, I couldn't help myself from screaming after falling into the same pit of spikes for the umpteenth time or after having barely defeated Donkey Kong with only a few shreds of life left.

There's no fancy three-dimensional graphics or cinematic touches found in many new games. With its fine test of brain and brawn, "Mario vs. Donkey Kong" does just fine without them.

Three stars out of four.

Three Video Game Makers Sue Over Software

Three makers of video games sued a Missouri company marketing software that enables consumers to make backup copies of computer games.

The federal lawsuit, filed Tuesday in New York, alleges that Games X Copy software by 321 Studios Inc. of suburban St. Louis violates copyright laws by illegally cracking copy-protection systems used by game makers.

The lawsuit marks a new legal front against 321 Studios, already at legal odds with Hollywood over the company's DVD-copying software.

Federal judges in New York and California have barred 321 from marketing the questioned DVD-cloning software - a victory for movie studios, which contended that such products violate the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act. That law bars circumvention of anti-piracy measures used to protect DVDs and other technology.

Since those rulings, 321 has shipped retooled versions of its DVD-copying

products, removing the software component required to descramble movies.

Tuesday's lawsuit - filed by Atari Inc., Electronic Arts Inc. and Vivendi Universal Games Inc. - also accuses 321 of violating the copyright law by circumventing technological protections used by entertainment software publishers to prevent piracy.

Doug Lowenstein, president of the Entertainment Software Association trade group, said the lawsuit seeks unspecified damages.

"There's not a dollar figure inserted there," said Lowenstein, whose group represents U.S. publishers of computer and video games. "I wouldn't get into speculating on dollar losses here. What's at stake here is a rather important legal principle - that products with no purpose other than to circumvent copyright protection are illegal under the DMCA."

Calling Games X Copy piracy-easing software "masquerading as a consumer-friendly tool," Lowenstein said that "obviously from the moment the device came out, we had concerns."

The lawsuit seeks a court order blocking 321's further production and sales of Games X Copy, which fetches $60 and lets users make what 321's Web site calls "a PERFECT backup copy of virtually any PC game."

"No more threat of losing a game due to theft, scratches, skipping, freezing or other media imperfections," 321's Web site says. "Your copy works just like the original; your entire collection can be archived and your investment protected."

Robert Moore, 321's founder and president, called the latest lawsuit confounding, saying provisions in federal copyright law allow consumers to make backup copies of their software. Games X Copy, he said, "is clearly designed for that purpose."

"This is par for the course," said Moore, who last month told a congressional panel the court rulings in Hollywood's favor have put his company "on the brink of annihilation."

By Tuesday, Moore said, 321's work force - once numbering about 400 - was less than two dozen.

Those suing the company "clearly want to drive a nail through our heart and make us dead," Moore said. "I wish we could get justice; I don't know where it is."

Lowenstein said game-copying software may facilitate theft of intellectual property, given that creating and marketing a top video game typically costs companies $5 million to $10 million.

"Video game copyright owners stand to lose an enormous amount from the piracy enabled by products like Games X Copy," he said.

Members of Lowenstein's association account for more than 90 percent of the $7 billion in entertainment software sales nationwide last year, with billions more in export sales of American-made entertainment software.

Campers Make Games at the VideoGame.Net Experience

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Susan Conway
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Campers Make Games at the VideoGame.Net Experience

Kids from New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania Make Games in Summer
Camps at Universities

PHILADELPHIA, JUNE 16, 2004 - VideoGame.Net announced the VideoGame.Net
Experience 2004, a series of interactive summer camps focused on teaching
kids in 6th through 12th grades how to make video games.

The VideoGame.Net Experience was conceived by Ed Fleming, President and
Founder of VideoGame.Net, as an educational and entertaining program
designed to help kids get more from their academic learning experiences.
Started as a summer camp at Penn State Great Valley in 2003, the
VideoGame.Net Experience has grown into a year-round program at six
university campuses.

The VideoGame.Net Experience provides gamers first-hand experience with
the tools needed to develop video games. The courses teach gamers how to
use Flash, Photoshop, Game Maker and other software for designing web-based
games. Beginning in the fall of 2004, VideoGame.Net and the universities
will expand the program to offer 3D game design courses, video game
journalism and engineering.

While the VideoGame.Net Experience focuses on teaching students about video
game development and design, it also provides a mechanism to teach kids
additional skills. "In addition to teaching what is involved in making
video games, the program also focuses on writing skills, critical thinking,
presentations, sciences and math concepts," said Susan Fleming, Vice
President of Curriculum Development. "When these traditional academic
skills are presented in the program they are directly applied to the game,
so it is fun and academic at the same time."

"The summer program focuses on game design and the history of game making,"
said David Kramer, VideoGame.Net's Director of Art Programs. "However, one
of the other really cool things about our program is the Arcade at each
campus. We offer the kids a chance to play some of the very best new and
pre-released games as well as retro-classics for the old NES and Atari.
Including these games within our lesson plans gives the kids a holistic
perspective of where videogames came from and where they are going."

The 2003 VideoGame.Net summer camp was very successful and attracted
hundreds of gamers from across the country. "To continue the success of the
summer camp, we are teaming up with a number of campuses to deliver this
year's program," said Susan Fleming. VideoGame.Net is working with five
Penn State University campuses and Hofstra University to offer open
enrollment for the VideoGame.Net Experience summer programs. Additionally,
a number of other colleges and universities are preparing to offer courses
in the fall or next year.

The VideoGame.Net Experience 2004 summer program is a series of two-week,
80 hour, summer camps. The first program starts on June 21, and new
sessions follow every week thereafter, through August. Starting in

September and October the universities will also offer after-school and
Saturday programs. A complete schedule can be found in the 'Make Games'
section at the VideoGame.Net website.

"I really love where VideoGame.Net is going with the Experience program
because its win-win for the children and the parents" stated Ed Fleming,
President and Founder of VideoGame.Net. "The kids love the program because
we are able to provide them with skills to make games. The parents love the
program because the skills we are teaching can also be used in other
professions, such as the sciences, computing, medicine, the arts, bio-tech,
management or any other 21st century profession."

For information on attending the VideoGame.Net Experience program visit the
'Make Games' section of the VideoGame.Net website. At the website you will
find a complete schedule of the participating universities and links to
their registration information.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online   -   Online Users Growl & Purr!
  """""""""""""""""""""

                    Classic Gaming Expo Takes E3 By Storm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Jayson Hill

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CLASSIC GAMING EXPO TAKES E3 BY STORM

Interactive Gaming Museum Rocks Kentia Hall, Wins Awards

VALLEY STREAM, NEW YORK - June 14, 2004 - The annual Electronic
Entertainment Expo is the ultimate showcase for all that is new in the
world of interactive entertainment. In 2004, as E3 celebrated its 10th
event, it also became a place where the now multi-billion-dollar
interactive entertainment industry could take a long, hard look at its
roots. The organizers of Classic Gaming Expo, along with sponsor
Intellivision Productions, brought the Interactive Gaming Museum to the
Los Angeles Convention Center's Kentia Hall with 18 playable,
historically-significant game consoles, 30 arcade games from the heyday
of coin-ops set for free-play, and a museum display containing an
impressive array of ultra-rare gaming items. The exhibit quickly became
the buzz of the show and was one of the must-see booths over the
three-day event.

While the CGExpo Interactive Gaming Museum was appreciated by the multitude
of show-goers who wanted to catch a few plays of their favorite classic

game, it also caught the eye of a few show critics. The Interactive Museum won several awards including being named among PC World's "Best Of Show", 2nd place in G4 TV's "Top Ten Achievements in Booth Design", and the tongue-in-cheek "Worst Graphics" award from GameSpy.

"We were thrilled to receive the 'Worst Graphics' award," said Joe Santulli, co-organizer of Classic Gaming Expo. "GameSpy recognized the fact that the games we were showing did have the worst graphics... and some of the best gameplay at E3 2004. These games were all about the player experience. The gaming technology of the time would not support stunning graphics, rich audio and an involved story. Designers had to make a superior playing game if they had any hope of it being a hit."

The CGExpo Interactive Gaming Museum at E3 2004 is part of Classic Gaming Expo's continuing effort to preserve, archive and share the rich history of the interactive entertainment industry. The Interactive Gaming Museum was conceived as a way to give the 65,000 E3 2004 attendees a glimpse into the annual Classic Gaming Expo show held in August, where a much larger exhibit of playable game systems and arcade games, game artifacts and game-industry alumni speaking on the early days of the industry will be on hand to celebrate the history of interactive entertainment. The show also includes many vendors selling both classic and newer game merchandise. Unlike E3's all-industry format, Classic Gaming Expo welcomes all game fans.

"What we brought to E3 for the Interactive Gaming Museum was only a fraction of the gaming artifacts that will be at Classic Gaming Expo 2004, August 21 and 22 at the San Jose Convention Center," said Santulli. "There we'll have all the room we need to allow our attendees to experience the depth and breadth of video gaming's history."

Information on attendance, ticketing, past Classic Gaming Expo events and links to awards won and stories written about CGExpo's Interactive Gaming Museum at E3 2004 are available at www.cgexpo.com.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

EBay's PayPal to Settle Lawsuit for $9.25 Million

PayPal, eBay Inc.'s online payment system, on Monday said it would pay $9.25 million to settle a federal class action lawsuit.

In their 2002 lawsuit, which resulted from the consolidation of two separate cases filed in federal court in Northern California, some PayPal customers alleged that the company did not appropriately communicate about customer transactions and did not appropriately process limits that were placed on some customer accounts.

The case involves individuals and businesses that had a PayPal account during the period from Oct. 1, 1999 through Jan. 31, 2004. PayPal users in

European Union member countries are excluded.

If the settlement is approved, the federal case and a similar case pending in California State Court, will be dismissed.

PayPal, which was purchased by eBay in October 2002, did not acknowledge that any of the plaintiffs' allegations are true.

"We're simply doing this to put the case behind us and to focus on more productive aspects of our business," PayPal spokeswoman Amanda Pires told Reuters.

Plaintiffs attorneys have asked the court for $3.3 million in fees and $135,000 in costs that, if approved, would be deducted from the settlement fund, Pires said.

American Technology Research analyst Mark Mahaney said the settlement account was immaterial to the operator of the world's No. 1 online bazaar.

"This is chump change for eBay," he said.

                    Attack Said to Blame for Slow Web Sites

Several major Web sites - including Yahoo!, Microsoft and Google - were inaccessible at times early Tuesday due to what the company that distributes them online called an attack.

The problem began about 8:45 a.m. EDT and lasted about two hours, said Jeff Young, a spokesman for Akamai Technologies Inc., whose network of servers mirror some of the Web's top destinations to improve their performance.

Young called it a "large scale, international attack on Internet infrastructure." However, there was no evidence that non-Akamai infrastructure was affected.

Amit Yoran, head of the Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity division, declined to comment on the alleged attack and its scope, deferring questions to Akamai. The government-funded CERT network emergency response team said it was too early to determine what happened.

Speedera Networks Inc., an Akamai rival, had none of its systems targeted in an attack Tuesday, spokesman Jay Mejia said.

Keynote Systems Inc., a Web performance measurement service, said the only sites where it saw trouble Tuesday were those served by Akamai.

Young said he had no immediate information on the nature of the alleged attack, nor did he know where it originated or other Internet infrastructure companies that might have been targeted.

Keynote said the availability of the top 40 sites it monitors dropped from 100 percent to just over 80 percent during the outage.

"We discovered it wasn't the Internet as a whole but a few large sites that dropped to nearly zero," said Lloyd Taylor, Keynote's vice president of technology and operations.

It also saw problems for sites belonging to FedEx, Alta Vista, Lycos and Symantec.

Major Web sites hire Akamai to distribute their content on its servers around the world - which helps balance demand, improve reliability and speed up delivery.

Taylor said the outage was consistent with a technical failure or an attack on Akamai's domain name server system, which routes traffic by translating Internet text addresses to the numerical addresses of actual computers.

During Tuesday's incident, Akamai's systems were slow in this regard, Young said. Users either experienced sluggish performance or time-out errors.

The company claims to have the world's largest distributed content network, consisting of more than 15,000 servers in more than 60 countries. At peak times, it can handle as much as 15 percent of the Internet's traffic, Young said.

The Akamai network experienced another technical problem in May - an issue Akamai said was software-related.

Spam Wars Hit the Next Battlefield

The Federal Trade Commission is weighing new weapons against spam, ranging from a bounty for reporting violators to new labels to the proposed Do Not E-Mail registry.

The FTC expects to release this week its first study about the feasibility of a Do Not E-Mail registry, similar to the Do Not Call registry that has proved a popular deterrent to telemarketers. And spam remains the commission's top priority tech issue, says Howard Beales, director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection. He spoke here at the International Association of Privacy Professionals' Truste Symposium recently, describing the challenges of enforcing spam laws and privacy policies.

Spam is the toughest problem the FTC has ever confronted because enforcement is difficult, Beales said. Spammers can conceal an e-mail address and make the message look like it came from anyone, anywhere. And the cost, even when there are low responses, makes it profitable.

"A spammer in one of our workshops said that even if one in ten thousand responds, it's a profitable venture," Beales said.

The FTC estimates that two-thirds of spam is deceptive or false and violates the law. The rest are pitches for porn and prescriptions. Beales estimates only about 16 percent of spam offers something that might be legitimate.

The FTC tries to track spam through the URLs in e-mail, he said.

"We follow the money," he said. "We can issue a subpoena to see what payment method was used for the URL and usually after six or more sequential subpoenas, we can find a real person."

But the payoff often is poor. Tracking spam takes enormous upfront resources but often doesn't lead to a worthwhile target, Beales said. Most

spammers are small operations; in one FTC study of 114 messages, only one message was from a Fortune 1000 company.

Still, armed with the new CAN-SPAM Act and fortified by Congressional and citizen complaints, the FTC is developing new weapons against spam.

It is developing an open relay project that should help identify insecure mail servers. Beales also cited Operation Secure Your Server, a worldwide effort to close access to spammer anonymity.

Tougher law enforcement is the answer, suggest some others.

"The reason we have so much spam is because law enforcement is not doing its job," says Steven B. Adler, program director of IBM enterprise privacy solutions. "It's mail fraud. If we want to control spam, we don't need caller ID, we need training for law enforcement. Make the penalty more costly than reward."

Spam is also related to another FTC priority: Privacy. The commission is charged with making sure organizations implement and follow privacy policies.

"Security is a process. There are always going to be new threats," Beales said. "Companies need to have a system of updating according to vulnerabilities. And it's important companies don't make [more] vulnerabilities in the process."

He cited a recent case in which Tower Records, after a system upgrade, omitted authentication code - which meant that anyone could get access to information about purchases.

Skimping on security isn't just unwise, it's illegal, he said.

"Deceptive or unfair practices are illegal," Beales said. "When security is inadequate, we think promises are deceptive."

The technical tools aren't inadequate, they simply aren't implemented as they should be, says John T. Sabo, manager of security, privacy, and trust initiatves with Computer Associates.

"Security is a component of privacy, yet we don't look at it holistically," Sabo says.

Others say standards aren't the answer.

"We have a lot of research work at IBM, but there's a dearth of actual implementations," Adler says. "There's no lack of standards, but a lack of implementations." Rather, diligence and better funding for privacy projects are the answer.

"Privacy is inadequately funded," Adler says. Companies consider the risk remote. "We don't think it will happen to us."

                    Feds Decline to Create 'Do-Not-Spam' List

The Bush administration said Tuesday it will not create a national do-not-spam registry to discourage unwanted e-mail, fearing it could

backfire and become a target list for new victims.

The Federal Trade Commission told Congress that senders of unwanted sales pitches might mine such a registry for names. Its chairman, Timothy Muris, quipped that consumers "will be spammed if we do a registry and spammed if we do not."

The commission was obligated by lawmakers to consider the proposal under the "can spam" legislation that Bush signed in December, an idea patterned after the FTC's enormously successful do-not-call registry to limit telemarketing calls.

But the FTC concluded that on the Internet, unlike within the highly regulated U.S. telephone network, regulators would be "largely powerless to identify those responsible for misusing the registry."

Muris said that, given the risks of consumers adding their names to a do-not-spam registry, "I wouldn't put my e-mail address on such a list."

Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., the leading supporter in Congress for a no-spam registry, said the FTC's decision was disappointing.

"The registry is not the perfect solution but it is the best solution we have," Schumer said.

Regulators instead proposed broad adoption of new authentication technology that will make it more difficult to disguise the origin of unwanted e-mails. Several proposals from leading technology companies, including Microsoft Corp., are under consideration by industry.

"A national do-not-e-mail registry, without a system in place to authenticate the origin of e-mail messages, would fail to reduce the burden of spam and may even increase the amount of spam received by consumers," the commission said.

If new authentication plans fail to emerge, the FTC will convene a federal advisory committee to determine whether the government could require Internet providers to adopt one.

"Without effective authentication of e-mail, any registry is doomed to fail," the commission said.

The government said it was particularly worried about issues of security and privacy with respect to children whose addresses might be added to such a registry.

"A registry that identified accounts used by children, for example, could assist legitimate marketers to avoid sending inappropriate messages to children," the commission said. "At the same time, however, the Internet's most dangerous users, including pedophiles, also could use this information to target children."

Also Tuesday, key House members on telecommunications issues moved to overturn regulations set to take effect next year aimed at preventing homes and offices from receiving junk faxes.

Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., chairman of the House Energy and Commerce telecommunications subcommittee, said he planned to introduce a bill Wednesday to rescind Federal Communications Commission regulations that requires a recipient to receive a commercial fax only if they have given

prior consent.

                    Comcast Slows Flow Of Spam

Comcast Corp., the country's largest provider of high-speed Internet
access, has begun blocking a channel frequently exploited by spammers to
send out large volumes of e-mail, a move that many technologists say was
long overdue and should be matched by other service providers.

On Monday, the company began targeting certain computers on its network of
5.7 million subscribers that appeared to be sending out large volumes of
unsolicited e-mail. Spokeswoman Jeanne Russo said that in those cases, it
is blocking what is known as port 25, a gateway used by computers to send
e-mail to the Internet.

The result, she said, was a 20 percent reduction in spam.

"We're taking a precision approach . . . against the top talkers of the
day," Russo said, referring to the computers being blocked.

The move is the latest in a continuing technological arms race between
spammers and Internet companies, which have yet to see lawsuits or federal
and state laws make a dent in the volume of unwanted e-mail.

For years, anti-spam activists have been pressuring Internet providers to
block port 25 for all users, because it allows e-mail to be sent directly
to the Internet without passing through computers operated by the service
provider.

E-mail from most residential consumers is processed by their Internet
providers' computers, which increasingly have been fortified with filters
and other technologies to limit spam and viruses. For these users, blocking
port 25 has no impact.

But Comcast and several other Internet providers let many home and small
businesses use their own computers, known as servers, to process e-mail.
Such customers use their online providers' networks but send e-mail
directly to the Internet.

Comcast, with its large number of customers, has drawn the particular ire
of the anti-spam community for not addressing the problem sooner. At a
recent anti-spam forum, one of its engineers acknowledged that the company
had huge numbers of spammers abusing its network.

The issue has become more acute as spammers have gotten more sophisticated.
Early on, they would sign up for an Internet account and start sending
unsolicited e-mail. When the Internet provider discovered them, they would
close up shop and start another account under another name.

Recently, spammers have infected tens of thousands of machines with
malicious software code, turning them into "zombies" that operate as mail
servers and launching pads for spam.

Legitimate owners of these machines usually don't know their computers have
been commandeered. More than 40 percent of all spam now comes from zombie
machines, according to some industry estimates.

Russo said Comcast is not blocking port 25 for all its users because it does not want to remove the option for legitimate customers who process their own e-mail. So the company is monitoring traffic and picking out machines that look suspicious.

Richard P. Wong, general manager for messaging at Openwave Systems Inc., said Comcast's efforts are fine as far as they go. But he said his company, which provides software for network operators, recommends that port 25 be universally shut off.

"These open relays will kill the Internet with spam unless they are blocked," said Wong, who also helps lead the Messaging Anti-Abuse Working Group, a coalition of network operators fighting spam. Wong said blocking port 25 is recommended by the group's guidelines of best practices.

Wong said he estimates that about one-third of all Internet service providers block port 25, while another one-third are now considering doing so.

The issue can be especially difficult for small Internet service providers, who don't want to lose customers that want to process their own e-mail. But Wong said forcing customers to have an Internet service provider or other third-party company process e-mail is inexpensive and would pay large dividends for the Internet as a whole.

Large Internet providers vary in their approaches. America Online Inc. and Earthlink Inc. require that all residential e-mail be run through their own servers. Businesses can open accounts and process their own e-mail after being vetted. Verizon Communications Inc. also allows business customers to process their own mail.

George Webb, a group manager of Microsoft Corp.'s anti-spam unit, said getting more aggressive on blocking port 25 "can have a large impact in a short amount of time." He said the company's MSN network is reliant on cable or phone-line partners to provide its broadband service, and Microsoft is "working with them" on the problem.

Webb said he thinks port 25 should be blocked by default, and customers should be required to apply for an exception.

Canadian Spam King Won't Send More E-Mail

A Canadian man accused of being one of the world's biggest spammers has agreed to stop sending the junk messages and plans to educate children about the dangers of the Internet, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

In March, Yahoo! Inc. sued Eric Head, his father and brother as part of a worldwide industry crackdown on hundreds of people sending unsolicited e-mail, or spam.

Yahoo alleged the three men ran a huge spamming operation and sent more than 94 million e-mails in one month alone to users of Yahoo's e-mail service.

The three have settled the lawsuit and agreed to pay Yahoo at least $100,000, Toronto's Globe and Mail reported in Tuesday's editions. The exact amount is confidential, but a lawyer for the family told the

newspaper it was "six figures."

Although the lawsuit named all three men, the allegations centered on Eric Head, 25, who ran a bulk e-mail business from the family's home in Kitchener, Ontario.

Head has shut down his operation, called Gold Disk Canada, and become a drummer in a rock band.

"Eric is out of business," said Huey Cotton, a Los Angeles lawyer who represented the men. "He's going to play in a band and find a way to use his knowledge to help protect kids on the Internet."

In a statement, Head expressed regret.

"I urge everyone who is involved in the commercial bulk e-mail business to cease all operations unless and until they are completely compliant with the requirements of the new United States anti-spam laws."

The settlement was reached several weeks ago and approved by a judge on Thursday.

Cotton said the agreement is not an admission of wrongdoing and the three men neither admit nor deny Yahoo's allegations. A lawyer for Yahoo confirmed the settlement but declined further comment.

ChoiceMail Puts a Stranglehold on Spam

I don't need Viagra, my credit is fine, and somehow I doubt the PhD offered via e-mail with "no required tests, classes, books, or interviews!" is going to be worth much. If you're inundated and infuriated by spam, the newly released free version of DigiPortal Software's ChoiceMail may prevent you from going postal.

I've found it does a wonderful job of mopping up the insidious e-mail that gets past most spam filters.

I receive, on average, about 33 pieces of junk mail per day. The spam blocker offered by my Internet provider screens out 75 percent of the messages, but one in four still get through, partly because spammers keep finding ingenious and insidious new ways to get past the filters. One way is by spelling Viagra "V!(at)gra."

ChoiceMail takes a different approach. It uses all the names in your electronic address book to create a "whitelist" of people you probably want to hear from. Messages from them will get through automatically, unless you decide otherwise. If you send e-mail to someone, ChoiceMail automatically adds that address to your whitelist - another feature that can be turned off, if you wish.

When someone who is not on the whitelist sends an e-mail, the message is moved, as if by an occult hand, into an "Unknown senders" folder. Senders then get an e-mail reply announcing that their message won't be delivered until they go to a Web page and fill out a short challenge form, which, as it turns out, isn't particularly challenging. It simply requests the sender's name, asks that individual to write a brief message, and type in a number that appears on the screen, which prevents an automated response.

DigiPortal says it's akin to your asking "Who's there?" when you hear a knock on the door.

The sender has four days to respond, otherwise their message is sent to the Junk Box, where it is held for a few more days before being automatically deleted. The program allows you to change the holding time.

If the sender has filled out the form, an on-screen message alerts you. A simple click will send you to the "Senders waiting for your approval" screen.

At that point, you can decide to accept that one piece of e-mail, accept all future e-mails from that sender, or put them on a "blacklist" that automatically deletes all their correspondence. If you choose to blacklist someone, the program gives you the option to e-mail an explanation.

ChoiceMail also allows you to accept all mail from a particular domain, such as Reuters.com, regardless of who is sending it to you.

The system isn't foolproof.

Newsletters, for example, are often sent from e-mail addresses that are incapable of receiving mail, so they might get lost.

In my case, ChoiceMail held up newsletters from quackwatch.org, which tracks the often-nefarious doings of people who hawk untested medical treatments; snopes.com, which checks the truthfulness of stories you hear via the Internet, and a newsletter for curmudgeonly journalists called the Burned-Out Newspapercreatures Guild (BONG) Bulletin, which tries to encourage ink-stained wretches like moi to work the phrase "occult hand" into their stories.

This is why it pays to periodically go through the "Unknown senders" folder or the Junk Box to see if you're missing anything important.

Once again, if you find something that should not have been blocked, you have the option of instantly adding senders or their company/organization to your whitelist.

The program also lets you create rules for blocking or allowing messages. For example: I've set up my program so that any message that mentions "Reuters" gets through.

ChoiceMail has a great system for previewing questionable messages. Rolling the cursor over a message reveals the first few words. If you double-click on the message, you can read the text without having to worry about viruses.

One problem I found: Some senders may not see the reply inviting them to fill out the challenge form.

When a friend with a Yahoo account tried to send me a message, the reply from ChoiceMail was treated as spam and sent to the Yahoo "Bulk Mail" folder, where it was missed.

The free version of ChoiceMail lacks some features included in the paid version, which costs $40. With the paid version, called ChoiceMail One, you can customize the reply that senders receive, protect an unlimited number of e-mail accounts, and use the program on Webmail from Yahoo, AOL, MSN and

Hotmail.

For most consumers, "ChoiceMail Free" should work just fine. It can be downloaded from http://www.DigiPortal.com.

US House Panel Approves Bill to Combat Spyware

A key U.S. congressional panel on Thursday endorsed a bill designed to crack down on deceptive "spyware" that hides in users' computers and secretly monitors their activities.

Lawmakers on a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee voted unanimously for a bill that would require purveyors of spyware on the Internet to notify people before loading new software on their machines.

Rep. Joe Barton, a Republican from Texas and chairman of the full committee, predicted the bill would proceed quickly through the House and "sometime this year become public law."

The bill, introduced by Reps. Mary Bono, a California Republican, and Ed Towns, a New York Democrat, also would allow the U.S. Federal Trade Commission to seek millions of dollars in fines for some of the practices lawmakers consider most egregious, such as logging users' keystrokes or stealing their identities.

It also would require that spyware be made easily removable.

"We continue to meet people who have had their Web pages hijacked, their browsers corrupted, and in some cases their children exposed to inappropriate material via nefarious programs lurking on their hard drives," said subcommittee chairman Rep. Cliff Stearns, a Florida Republican.

Spyware can sap computing power, crash machines and bury users under a blizzard of unwanted ads. It can capture passwords, credit-card numbers and other sensitive data.

While popular among lawmakers, the proposed legislation has not been embraced by the FTC.

FTC officials have told lawmakers they already have the laws they need to combat the spread of spyware. And they fear the new spyware law could end up being a problem for sellers of legitimate software - some of which uses the same technology as spyware but helps computer users navigate the Internet.

Backers of the spyware bill said it has been modified to address those concerns.

"Our goal was to produce a bill that was not overly prescriptive, specifically directed at egregious practices, and which also preserved legitimate uses of the technology," Stearns said.

SPY ACT Wins U.S. Congressional Subcommittee Approval

The SPY ACT (Securely Protect Yourself Against Cyber Trespass Act) has been passed by the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection. This represents a significant breakthrough in the effort to make the SPY ACT law.

The proposed legislation to shield consumers from invasive and unsolicited spyware was sponsored by California Republican Congresswoman Mary Bono and New York Democrat Congressman Ed Towns.

"Passage of the SPY ACT on June 17th represents a cooperative effort to bring common-sense legislation forward to protect consumers from the threat of spyware," said Bono.

The bill protects individuals from unknowingly downloading spyware, says Bono, by requiring that they receive a clear and conspicuous notice prior to any such download.

As a result of amendments introduced by subcommittee chairman Cliff Stearns, a Florida Republican, the bill now includes provisions to prohibit other unfair or deceptive behavior, such as key-stroke logging, computer highjacking or displaying advertisements that cannot be closed.

The legislation will be considered by the full House Energy and Commerce Committee before going to the floor of the House of Representatives for final passage. A companion bill recently was introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senators Burns, Wyden and Boxer, and currently is under consideration in the Senate Commerce Committee.

"I look forward to the passage of this strengthened bill to fight spyware-related privacy invasions. We are one step closer to restoring safety, confidence and control to consumers when using their own computers," Bono said.

The Act would make it unlawful for an unauthorized user to take control of a computer to change its settings; damage the computer; incur financial charges on the computer owner's behalf; or use it to cause damage to other computers.

It also would prohibit the collecting of personally identifiable information through the use of keystroke logging - or as a result of monitoring or analyzing the content of the Web pages, or other online locations accessed using the computer. Installing unauthorized software on a computer or interfering with anti-spyware and antivirus software already installed also are prohibited.

California Teen Gets Almost 3 Years Jail in eBay Scam

A southern California teenager who previously bilked investors out of $1 million in an Internet betting scheme was sentenced on Monday to almost three years in jail for an unrelated scam he operated through online auctioneer eBay Inc.

Cole Bartiromo, 19, was sentenced by a federal judge to 33 months in prison and ordered to pay about $20,000 in restitution after pleading guilty in February to charges he posted items for sale on eBay and then collected payment, without actually shipping the merchandise.

He also pleaded guilty to bank fraud for attempting to convince a Wells Fargo employee to wire $400,000 to an offshore account he had established, and to cash checks for him received from victims in the eBay scam.

Bartiromo, from Mission Viejo, California, was 17 and in high school when federal securities regulators discovered he had obtained nearly $1 million from around 1,000 investors by promising them safe bets with online sportsbooks.

They later found he had also made more than $90,000 in profits by manipulating the shares of at least 15 publicly-traded companies.

Bartiromo returned the money solicited from the investors and paid a settlement on the stock charges.

Companies Team to Reel in Phishing Scams

A new consortium of companies from across different industries has formed to tackle the problem of online identity fraud, better known as phishing.

The Trusted Electronic Communications Forum (TECF) has representatives from leading retail, telecommunications, financial services, and technology companies. The group will work with the U.S. and other governments, as well as standards organizations and companies to fix problems such as e-mail and Web-site spoofing, which contribute to a fast-growing online identity theft problem, says Shawn Eldridge, TECF chairman and director of products and marketing at TECF member company PostX.

A number of leading companies have signed on to the TECF, including some that have had their names besmirched by phishing scams in the past. Member companies include Best Buy, AT&T, Charles Schwab, Fidelity Investments, IBM, and Siebel Systems, the group says in a statement.

Representatives will form panels to develop long-term and short-term strategies to combat the phishing problem, including new technology and technology standards, best practices, and legal action against suspected identity thieves. There are few specific details about TECF's plans beyond those general goals because the group has just formed, Eldridge says.

The TECF will join other groups devoted to the phishing problem, including the Anti-Phishing Working Group, another industry consortium made up of financial institutions, online retailers, Internet service providers, and law enforcement. As opposed to that group, which tracks and reports on phishing scams, the TECF will focus more on developing and promoting standards that companies can use to combat phishing and to prevent the erosion of online commerce, Eldridge says.

In addition to working alongside other ant-iphishing groups, TECF will also consider recent proposals such as Microsoft's Caller ID specification and a proposal from Yahoo called Domain Keys. Both of these proposals are intended to eliminate e-mail spoofing, which is used by both spammers and those behind phishing attacks. However, TECF has not yet taken a position on those technologies, Eldridge says.

The new group was unveiled at the first ever E-mail Technology Conference in San Francisco and comes amid growing warnings about the danger posed by

online scams such as phishing attacks, which combine spam e-mail messages and Web pages that look like legitimate e-commerce sites to steal sensitive information like user names, passwords, bank account, and credit card numbers.

A survey conducted by Gartner recently found that illegal access to checking accounts is the fastest growing type of U.S. financial consumer fraud, due in part to the growth in online scams.

Gartner surveyed 5000 online U.S. adults in April. Based on the results of that survey, the company estimates that 1.98 million adults have experienced this sort of crime in the past 12 months, losing approximately $2.4 billion, or $1200 per victim, to fraud, the company says.

Also in April, the Anti-Phishing Working Group said reports of phishing campaigns grew by more than 178 percent from the previous month, to more than 1100 unique scams.

While many of the details about the Trusted Electronic Communications Forum have to be worked out, the group has set up a Web site at TECF.org.

Web Advertisers Employing New Tools

Visit the gaming portal IGN.com or the computing news site BetaNews, and you might find some Web links in green instead of blue. As you move your mouse over them, ads pop up.

IGN and BetaNews are among about 200 sites using Vibrant Media Inc.'s new technology for targeting advertisements.

Its IntelliTXT service scans Web pages for keywords and highlights certain words, such as "SUV" or "Toyota." Point to the word, and a rectangular box with a text ad floats over the page, much like dialogue balloons in comic strips.

"We can pull out three, four, five different concepts from an article and find relevant advertisers," said Doug Stevenson, Vibrant Media's co-founder and chief executive.

Ads are similar to those found at search sites, except they blend into the page rather than appear on the side. Vibrant Media gets most of its ads from Yahoo! Inc.'s Overture Services.

Sree Sreenivasan, a new media professor at Columbia University, worries that the practice further blurs the line between advertising and editorial content, but he's not surprised advertisers are trying.

IntelliTXT's ads are clearly marked as "sponsored links" in response to requests from Web site owners, Stevenson said. He also stressed that words are double underlined in green to distinguish them from regular links, which are generally single underlined in blue.

Stevenson also said sites are discouraged from mixing ads with breaking news stories, though that is primarily to avoid gaffes that may result in travel ads linked with a story, say, on an airplane crash.

Vibrant Media, based in San Francisco, began offering the technology for

general use two months ago after a year of testing with technology, finance and auto sites.

The company said sites now using IntelliTXT include The Motley Fool, The Auto Channel, Experts-Exchange.com and Computing.Net.

Vibrant Media shares ad revenues with the Web sites.

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